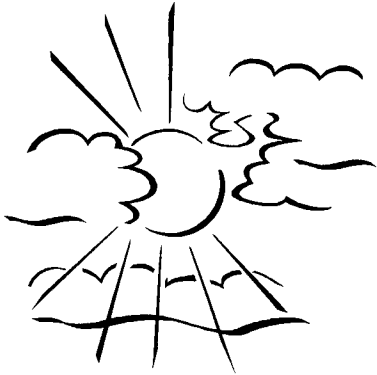


***Department
of
Human
Services***

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



*Important story at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

TOPIC	PAGE
*Medicaid	2-5
Child Abuse/Neglect	6-14
*LIHEAP	15
Unintended Pregnancy	16-17
Food Assistance	18

Governor Adds Muscle to Curb Medicaid Fraud

By CLIFFORD J. LEVY and MICHAEL LUO

Published: July 20, 2005

Gov. George E. Pataki yesterday ordered a broad overhaul of the state agencies that protect Medicaid from fraud and abuse, creating an independent inspector general's office and bringing in a former federal prosecutor to help reorganize the policing of the program, which is New York State's largest expense.

The inspector general is expected to take over some authority from the State Department of Health, which administers the overall \$44.5 billion program but has fared poorly in detecting Medicaid fraud and waste compared with its counterparts in other states. The changes will be carried out by executive order, the governor said, and will not require the approval of the Legislature.

Mr. Pataki said he was also appointing Paul Shechtman, a former federal prosecutor who led the governor's criminal justice initiatives early in his tenure, as an unpaid adviser to develop new strategies for combating wrongdoing in the program and revamping the agencies. The current antifraud system was put in place after the nursing home scandals of the 1970's.

The governor's actions followed articles in The New York Times yesterday and Monday that detailed how billions of dollars in Medicaid spending were being siphoned from the program through fraud, waste and profiteering.

"If there's one dollar - and I'm sure there's a lot more than one dollar - that is fraudulent, that hasn't been aggressively pursued, then that's got to change, and it will change," Mr. Pataki told reporters at an afternoon appearance at the State University of New York at Albany.

Medicaid, a 40-year-old program that provides health care to 4.2 million low-income New Yorkers, has grown sharply over the last decade, even as the state has scaled back the security force intended to safeguard the spending.

The Times reported that the State Department of Health, which bears primary responsibility for making sure Medicaid payments are proper, referred just 37 cases of suspected fraud to the state attorney general's office for possible prosecution in 2004, far fewer than similar agencies in other large states. Recoveries of money from fraud and abuse inquiries by the Department of Health have fallen 70 percent since 2000, according to federal statistics.

It has not been just the department that has lagged. The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit in the attorney general's office, which prosecutes fraud, has fallen behind its counterparts in other large states as well, according to federal statistics.

According to the governor's announcement, the inspector general will have subpoena power and is supposed to coordinate and consolidate antifraud efforts between the Department of Health and other agencies that have some role in the program, including the Office of Mental Health and the State Education Department.

It has not been determined whether the current fraud detection staff at the Department of Health will move to the new agency, or instead be overseen jointly by the health commissioner and the inspector general.

Administration officials said the current system was governed by a patchwork of formal and informal agreements between state and federal agencies that was probably outmoded and that Mr. Shechtman would be asked to evaluate and streamline it.

Mr. Pataki also announced that he was asking doctors and other staff members at SUNY medical centers around New York to help the state develop better antifraud initiatives.

Using a laptop computer, reporters for The Times analyzed millions of Medicaid billing records and found numerous instances of spikes in claims, a telltale sign of fraud, that were never scrutinized by the state. The billings of a Brooklyn dentist, Dr. Dolly Rosen, rose to \$4 million in 2003 from zero in 2001. Dr. Rosen, who was paid by Medicaid for as many as 991 procedures a day in 2003, was indicted on charges of stealing more than \$1 million from the program after The Times questioned the state about her billings.

Addressing precisely this kind of technological shortcoming, Mr. Pataki said the inspector general would work with the State Office for Technology to find better ways to analyze Medicaid billings.

The announcement by Mr. Pataki, a Republican, was met with approval by legislative leaders, as well as by the state attorney general, Eliot Spitzer, a Democrat who is running for governor.

The governor did not announce his choice for Medicaid inspector general.

In an interview, Mr. Shechtman said he had just begun to examine the problems in the system, but he suspected that additional money and legislation would probably be needed.

"It sounds to me like at the moment, we have made it too easy for people who are embarking on fraud," said Mr. Shechtman, who is a private lawyer. "And that can't be good government."

Published: July 20, 2005
(Page 2 of 2)

While the governor plans to use an executive order to create an inspector general, the Republican-controlled Senate approved legislation in May that created a somewhat similar office. At the time, Mr. Pataki did not announce support for the measure, and it was opposed by the Democratic majority in the Assembly, which has long allied itself with large health care lobbies and unions.

At a news conference at City Hall in Manhattan yesterday, John E. Sweeney, a Republican congressman from upstate New York, and State Senator Dean G. Skelos, a Nassau County Republican, called on the federal government to audit how New York is spending its share of federal money on antifraud efforts.

"This abuse is reprehensible and has to stop," Mr. Sweeney said, adding that he believed the current system to be broken.

"It's obviously not working," he said. "Something else needs to happen."

The Assembly speaker, Sheldon Silver, a Democrat, said in a telephone interview that he would support more money for fraud detection. "It's clear that something is necessary," Mr. Silver said, adding that he was not ready to settle upon an exact figure.

James Mehmet, who retired in 2001 as the chief of investigators for the Health Department's fraud and abuse office in New York City, applauded the administration's proposal. The pooling of resources in an inspector general's office was a significant step, he said, along with the independence of the unit from the health department.

"It takes the politics out of it," he said. "It's removing the investigative function from the agency that is concerned about providing the services."

Several states, including Florida, Illinois and Texas, have set up similar kinds of inspector general offices.

Brian Flood, an inspector general for health programs in Texas, said the creation of the office led to a 23 percent jump in recoveries from fraud inquiries between the 2003 and 2004 fiscal years, even though more money was not budgeted for antifraud efforts.

"The Health Department, its mission is to deliver services," Mr. Flood said. "Whereas, an I.G.'s mission is to question the delivery of services. Those aren't diametrically opposed, but pretty close. One is, 'How fast can I get the French fries out the window.' The other is, 'Does the guy need the fries at all?' "

Attorney general charges Detroit-area group with Medicaid fraud

7/18/2005, 7:10 p.m. ET

The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — A Detroit-area corporation that provides nursing care to handicapped patients has been charged with filing false Medicaid claims totaling nearly \$900,000, Attorney General Mike Cox said Monday.

Southfield-based Friends Who Care Inc. was arraigned Friday on 35 counts of Medicaid False Claims in East Lansing's 54-B District Court. The four-year felony also carries a maximum \$50,000 fine.

Cox also filed a civil suit against the corporation in Ingham County, seeking restitution plus penalties of \$3.5 million.

A woman who answered the phone at Friends Who Care on Monday declined to comment.

Cox said the corporation billed Medicaid — a joint state-federal program that covers health care costs for the poor — for services that weren't performed. Cox said an audit found that Friends Who Care billed more than \$750,000 in services and \$145,000 in mileage charges, but the claims weren't substantiated in patient files.

A preliminary exam is scheduled for Oct. 21.

Father faces 1 charge of open murder

Authorities believe Port Huron resident shook infant to death

By ANGELA MULLINS
Times Herald

July 20, 2005

A 36-year-old Port Huron man was arraigned Tuesday in St. Clair County District Court on open murder and first-degree child abuse charges in the death of his infant daughter.

Authorities believe Jimmy Sanchez shook his daughter, Miranda, causing a head injury that led to her death.

Port Huron Police Lt. Jim Jones said an autopsy Monday confirmed the infant died from the injuries sustained to her head.

Sanchez, who faces up to life in prison, is charged as a habitual offender. He previously was convicted of second-degree criminal sexual conduct and domestic violence, Chief Assistant Prosecutor Mike Hulewicz said in court.

He's being held without bond in the county jail in Port Huron. A preliminary exam is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Aug. 2.

Miranda, who was about 3 weeks old when police began investigating the incident, died Sunday in Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit.

She had been in the hospital since July 11 when Sanchez called 911 from his home in the 700 block of Chestnut Street to report the infant had stopped breathing.

When emergency crews arrived at Sanchez's residence, they took the baby to Port Huron Hospital. The child later was transferred to Detroit with severe injuries, police said.

Sanchez originally told police the baby was injured after being dropped during feeding. Further investigation led police to believe the infant's head was injured when Sanchez shook her.

Further details about the autopsy results are not being released because of the ongoing police investigation, Jones said.

Contact Angela Mullins at (810) 989-6270 or amullins@gannett.com.

Originally published July 20, 2005

Father Charged In Port Huron Baby's Death

Child Dies At Children's Hospital

POSTED: 4:38 pm EDT July 19, 2005

UPDATED: 4:48 pm EDT July 19, 2005

A Port Huron man was arraigned Tuesday in 72nd District Court in the death of his 1-month-old daughter.

Jimmy Sanchez, 26, was charged with open murder, a felony punishable by up to life in prison; first degree child abuse, a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison; and habitual offender second offense, according to the St. Clair County Prosecutor's Office.

Sanchez' daughter, Miranda, was pronounced dead at Children's Hospital Monday afternoon after suffering critical injuries while at home with her father last week in the 700 block of Chestnut in Port Huron, police said.

Sanchez told police that the child fell, but police believe Miranda's injuries were the result of her father shaking her, according to police.

Sanchez is being held without bond at the St. Clair County Jail.

The results of an autopsy conducted Monday on the child have not yet been returned.

Mom kills self, 4-year-old son before custody hearing

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

By John Tunison The Grand Rapids Press

ALLEGAN COUNTY -- A Lee Township woman who police say fatally shot her 4-year-old son, then herself, was scheduled to be in a Van Buren County courtroom today for a custody hearing with the boy's father.

It was the first time the court was to consider granting the boy's father unsupervised parenting time.

Allegan County sheriff's detectives say child-custody issues may have played some role in Tuesday's deaths of 22-year-old Amanda Rawson and her son, Leonel Theodore Ortiz.

But they were uncertain how much of a role.

"Obviously, that was one of the issues that was going on in her life right now," sheriff's Lt. Frank Baker said.

Detectives said Rawson's father discovered the bodies about 5:55 a.m. Tuesday near the rear of his house at 271 54th St. in southern Allegan County. The boy's body was inside Rawson's pickup while her body was on the ground nearby.

Baker said Rawson's father had gotten up to check on a goat when he saw the bodies. Detectives believe the shootings occurred sometime in the early morning hours.

Van Buren County court records show Amanda Rawson had sole legal custody of her son. But a judge in October 2004 ordered supervised parenting time for the child's father, Leonel Angel Ortiz, Rawson's ex-boyfriend, allowing Ortiz to meet with his son at Kalamazoo Family and Child Services.

Ortiz, who previously had lived with Rawson in a Holland apartment for nearly two years, petitioned the court earlier in 2004 to start taking child support from his income. He paid about \$50 a month.

A hearing scheduled for 9 a.m. today was to determine whether Ortiz, 33, should get unsupervised parenting time.

Mom kills self, 4-year-old son before custody hearing

Page 2 of 2

Court records hint at a rocky relationship between Rawson and Ortiz. She filed for and received personal protection orders against him in 2001 and 2003.

In the 2001 petition granted by an Allegan County court -- which she terminated voluntarily two months after it was granted -- Rawson claimed Ortiz was abusive to her and their son. She said she once tried to leave Ortiz, but alleged he locked their son in a pickup until she agreed to reconcile, according to court documents.

She later asked the court to rescind the order because they were working out their problems and planned to get counseling.

The 2003 petition, granted by a Van Buren County court, showed Rawson was living without Ortiz in South Haven. She claimed her ex-boyfriend was harassing her and her co-workers. Ortiz could not be reached for comment.

A neighbor at the West 40th Street apartment complex in Holland where Rawson once lived remembered her as a quiet woman. She moved after her son began to walk.

"They had their ups and downs," neighbor Lorice Young said of the couple.

But, both were good with their child. Young recalls watching Amanda playing on the floor in the apartment with her young son before they moved away.

Relatives of Rawson declined to comment outside the rural 54th Street home. Neighbors also declined comment.

Allegan County Undersheriff Jim Hull said police continue to investigate what may have caused Rawson to kill her child and herself, but he also cited "some family relationship issues and child-custody type things" as motives.

"We don't know if it was an instantaneous decision on her part or something that was planned," he said.

Rawson had no criminal record, state police records show.

He described the deaths as a tragedy for the family.

"Your heart goes out to them. There is just nothing to do at this point except try to help them through it," Hull said.

Press writer Shandra Martinez contributed to this story.

Weeks after abuse probe, 'blunt force' kills girl, 2

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

By Theresa D. McClellan and Ken Kolker The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- Weeks before 2-year-old Aiyana Cisneros was found dead, the victim of a homicide in her mother's home, Grand Rapids police and protective services workers investigated a complaint of abuse, police said.

But despite a bruise near the girl's pelvis, they could not substantiate allegations of abuse and Aiyana was returned to her mother, Lt. Paul Warwick said.

On Tuesday, the girl died in her mother's Northeast Side home, the victim of an assault, Warwick said. An autopsy showed she suffered "multiple blunt force" blows to her chest and abdomen that caused internal bleeding, he said.

Police said they have made no arrests.

Police were called to the home at 427 Curtis St. NE about 9:30 a.m. after the mother or her live-in boyfriend found the girl not breathing in an upstairs bedroom, Warwick said. The mother and boyfriend were home at the time, Warwick said.

Neighbor Marvin Bolhuis said he watched Tuesday as the child was removed from the home.

"They said no pulse, no breath," he said.

The night before she died, a neighbor said she saw the curly-haired toddler crying on her tricycle as a man yelled at her and repeatedly kicked her trike backward.

Watching from across the street, 37-year-old Beatrice Kabelman said she never considered calling police because the child's mother was watching the scene from her porch.

"She was such a cute little baby, and he was being so rude to her, telling her to shut up and kicking her bike," Kabelman said. "She almost fell off."

Burned girl returned to hospital after father takes her home

By John Michalak

Daily Tribune Staff Writer

PUBLISHED: July 19, 2005

HAZEL PARK — City police intervened on behalf of a burned one-year-old girl after her father removed her from St. John Oakland Hospital Sunday because he disagreed with doctors' assessment and prescribed treatment of her injuries, police said.

The girl suffered the burns after someone attending a gathering at the parents' house in Hazel Park threw gasoline on an outside fire pit, police said. The girl is in "good condition" at Children's Hospital of Michigan, Detroit, a spokeswoman said.

An attending physician at St. John Oakland Hospital, Madison Heights, recommended the child immediately be transported to a burn specialist at Children's Hospital.

According to police reports, the father took his daughter home from the hospital, prompting officials at St. John Oakland Hospital to call police. Madison Heights police received the call and notified Hazel Park officers about the situation. Hazel Park officers went to an East Hayes home where they encountered the father, 27, who smelled of intoxicants, had "glassy eyes" and "slightly slurred" his speech, police said.

The father said he wasn't happy with care the girl was receiving at St. John Oakland Hospital and didn't agree with the doctor on the treatment, so he took his daughter home after conferring with his girl's mother, police said.

The father told police red popsicle juice on his daughter caused him to believe she had serious burns. However, when the physician at St. John Oakland Hospital wiped away the juice, the father thought the burns were "less severe," police said.

Officers went to the couple's house and advised them an ambulance was on the way, police said. The parents agreed to have the girl transported to Children's Hospital, police added.

Hazel Park Detective Lt. Michael Kolp said the case has been referred to Family Independent Agency in Oakland County.

"If they think there's a problem, they will let us know," Kolp said. (The father's) opinion about the burns was that the situation was not as serious

as what the doctor thought. We intervened to make sure of the health and welfare of the child. We'll be calling FIA also."

Police said a 57-year-old Hazel Park man attending the gathering at the parents' home tried to start a fire in a pit. He carried the gas across the lawn and splashed some on the fire, police said.

The man told police some of the gas must have spilled onto the lawn because once the gas hit the fire, a small line of the leaked gas ignited and shot back about 20 feet to where the girl was standing.

Contact John Michalak at john.michalak@dailytribune.com or 248-591-2521.

Woman pleads guilty in baby-buying incident, faces up to two years in prison

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

FROM LOCAL AND
NEWS SERVICE REPORTS

A 30-year-old Lake County woman could face up to two years in prison after pleading guilty Tuesday in Williamsburg, Ky., to a charge of selling or purchasing a child, according to reports. Kimberly Brick of Nirvana was charged in April, after 18-year-old Jessica Cornett of Williamsburg told police she had sold her 10-month-old daughter to Brick in March for \$5,000. Mark Brick, Kimberly Brick's husband, was not charged because he did not make the trip to Kentucky to pick up the baby, according to officials.

The Bricks, who had the baby for about a month, turned her over to authorities in April. But Kimberly Brick initially denied any wrongdoing, claiming the money was a loan to Cornett, so she could move to Michigan to be closer to the baby.

The Bricks had been trying for years to have a baby or adopt one, according to their attorney. Cornett also pleaded guilty Tuesday to the charge of selling or purchasing a child, the report said. Brick entered an Alford Plea, meaning she admits there's evidence to convict her, according to a television news report from Kentucky.

Brick's attorney said she simply made a mistake by dealing with Cornett and Kenneth Couch, her boyfriend at the time, the news report said.

"During those negotiations, I think the involvement that my client had in it is that she didn't fully understand the ramifications of the law ... when it came to loaning money to the adoption of children," Ron Reynolds, Kimberly Brick's attorney, was quoted as saying in the report.

Allen Trimble, the commonwealth's attorney in Whitney County, Ky., said he recommended a two-year sentence for Brick and Cornett, but may offer probation for Brick if she testifies against Couch, 22.

Couch, who is not the baby's father, was also charged in the case but has pleaded not guilty.

Kentucky mother pleads guilty to selling child to Michigan woman

7/19/2005, 10:22 p.m. ET

The Associated Press

WILLIAMSBURG, Ky. (AP) — A mother in southeastern Kentucky pleaded guilty Tuesday to selling her 10-month-old baby to a Michigan woman, prosecutors said.

Jessica Cornett, 18, of Williamsburg, was accused of selling her 10-month-old baby to Kimberly Brick, 30, of Chase, Mich.

Allen Trimble, Whitley County commonwealth's attorney, said Cornett sold the baby in March for \$5,000 in a deal that was reached in Kentucky, where paying or being paid in an adoption procedure is illegal.

Brick also pleaded guilty Tuesday to a charge of selling or purchasing a child, Trimble said.

Cornett's boyfriend, Kenneth Couch, 22, of Williamsburg, also was charged in the case. He has pleaded not guilty.

Trimble said he recommended a two-year sentence for Cornett and for Brick, but would recommend probation for Brick if she testified against Couch.

State out of money to prevent poor from losing electricity

7/19/2005, 6:19 p.m. ET

By AMY F. BAILEY The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Michigan is out of money used to help poor people avoid losing their electricity because they could not afford the bill, the head of the state's social services department said Tuesday.

The state has used up \$117 million from the Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund that comes from the federal government, two-and-a-half months before the Oct. 1 start of the new fiscal year, when the money is replenished, Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow said.

"We don't have a lot of tricks in our bag," Udow said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "We are extremely concerned about this."

This year marks the first since the early 1980s that the program has run out of money, Udow said. She attributed the shortfall to increasing energy costs, fewer federal dollars and a higher demand because of the state's lagging economy and high unemployment rate.

About 975,000 people used money from the program to avoid shutoffs last year, Udow said. Michigan had the second-highest number of people in the program, only behind New York, she said.

Udow said the state has some emergency funding to offset the used-up federal funding, including \$900,000 from a program intended to keep families together rather than putting children into the foster care system. The state can use that money because an electricity shut-off would prompt caseworkers to consider removing children from a home, she said.

People who want to apply for funding from that program will be considered on a first-come-first-serve basis, Udow said. That could mean trouble, particularly for low-income senior citizens, if 90-degree days continue next month.

Department of Human Services' branch offices across the state also have some money left to help people avoid shutoffs, Udow said. She also encouraged people who need help with their energy bills to consider contacting nonprofit organizations.

Kathleen Walgren, executive director of The Heat and Warmth Fund, or THAW, said she is worried about senior citizens getting through the rest of the summer if they are not able to be in air conditioning. But she said she also is concerned about what could happen in the fall.

"Utility companies do an audit and inspect where service is off and they step up shutoffs at that time to get people to do something about their bill before the cold weather starts," she said.

"They do a lot of shutoffs in October."

Difficulties for the program don't end when the new fiscal year starts this fall. The federal budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year includes \$31 million less for the program than it did in 1986, Udow said.

On the Net:

Department of Human Services: <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs>

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

Contraception, conscience collide in pregnancy plan

Special to The Detroit News

Two groups debate Gov. Jennifer Granholm's proposal for reducing unintended pregnancies:

Increasing contraception access reduces pregnancies

Sandra J. Reese, president and chief executive of Planned Parenthood of Southeast Michigan in Detroit:

Gov. Jennifer Granholm's blueprint for preventing unintended pregnancies may be the one shining light in this year's budget crisis. Planned Parenthood of Southeast Michigan supports the governor's plan, which includes increasing family planning services, passing contraceptive equity legislation and implementing an education program to teach parents how to communicate with their children about sex.

The passage of contraceptive equity legislation is critical for improving access to birth control and preventing unintended pregnancies. Contraception is basic health care and used by 85 percent of women at some point in their life. Women deserve to have contraceptives covered by their insurance plans at the same level as other prescription drugs.

State Sens. Beverly Hammerstrom, R-Temperance, and Martha Scott, D-Highland Park, have introduced legislation that would do just that. Contraceptive equity is a matter of fairness and will save families and businesses money. The cost of covering contraceptives will pale in comparison to the cost associated with carrying an unintended pregnancy to term.

The governor's plan also supports increased family planning services like those offered at Planned Parenthood health centers. Family planning services promote healthy families by preventing unplanned pregnancies, are cost-effective, reduce the need for abortions and are overwhelmingly supported by the majority of Michigan families.

It is estimated that each public dollar spent to provide family planning services saves an estimated \$3 that would otherwise be spent in Medicaid costs for pregnancy-related care and medical care for newborns. Often family planning services may be the only health care a woman receives.

The governor is right on the money with her plan. It just makes sense.

Mandated contraception threatens religious freedom

Kristen R. Cella, associate for public policy with the Michigan Catholic Conference in Lansing:

Granholm proposal
The Granholm administration wants to:

- Require private health insurance companies in Michigan to pay for contraception if they provide prescription drug coverage.

- Expand government-paid family planning services for more low-income parents.

- Hold seminars statewide to advise parents on how to talk to their middle school children about sex, abstinence and pregnancy.

Related reports

The Founding Fathers took great strides to ensure the state respected the rights of organized religion. Unfortunately, with Gov. Jennifer Granholm's recently announced support for mandated contraception coverage in prescription insurance plans, religious freedom is being threatened in Michigan.

The legislation would force all faithful Catholics, including Catholic ministries, to choose between providing contraceptive coverage -- violating our conscience -- or eliminating essential prescription coverage. Even priests and religious women would be mandated by the state to possess contraceptive coverage to secure prescription insurance.

Catholics are not the only population whose religious freedom rights would be trampled upon. Several contraceptives, such as the "morning-after pill" and Depo-Provera, have proven to cause abortions by preventing implantation of a newly conceived child. Inevitably, pro-life residents of Michigan, regardless of religion, would be forced to pay for this atrocity through their prescription insurance coverage.

Supporters claim mandated contraception would reduce unintended pregnancies and abortions. Experience and research, however, maintains that contraception leads to an increased number of unintended pregnancies and abortions.

Despite prolific access to and use of contraception, the number of procured abortions continues to linger around 1.3 million per year. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, more than half of women having abortions used contraception the month they became pregnant.

Mandated contraception is an attack upon religious freedom and counteracts the intentions of its supporters. Promoting abstinence policies, which the governor has also supported, is the only sure way to prevent unintended pregnancies.

What do you think? Mail letters to The News, 615 W. Lafayette, Detroit, MI 48226, fax them to (313) 222-6417 or e-mail them to letters@detnews.com.

A call for cans ...

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

The generous people of Saginaw County need to come to the rescue of the City Rescue Mission of Saginaw and help restock its pantry with canned vegetables.

Last week, Rescue Mission officials said the charity's supply of canned corn, peas, beans and other vegetables was depleted.

The empty cupboard forced the mission to send staff out last week to buy groceries to fill some of the nearly 300 food baskets it distributes to the needy twice a month.

It hopes for enough donations before its next shipment of food baskets on Wednesday, July 27.

Take your canned goods directly to the mission, 1021 Burt at East Genesee, or send a check to P.O. Box 548, Saginaw, MI 48606.

This is one order we're sure Saginaw County residents can and will fill. Most of us can spare a stray tin of vegetables (or two or three cans) to help feed some of our hungry neighbors.

It's time to rescue the Rescue Mission.